

EXHIBIT 11

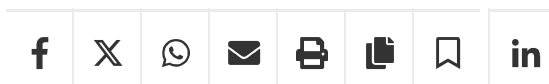
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From the Daily Journal archives

Just how will Corpus go?

By Mark Simon

Nov 14, 2024



It appears that getting rid of a sheriff is going to be a lot more difficult than electing one. No matter the difficulties, San Mateo County Sheriff Christina Corpus has to go.

As demonstrated unequivocally by the 400-page investigative report produced by retired Judge LaDoris Cordell, Corpus and her principal partner, Victor Aenlle, have engaged in a pattern of corruption, self-interest, official misconduct and bad judgment that is nearly unprecedented in this county.

Consider this damning summary from Judge Cordell: “Lies, secrecy, intimidation, retaliation, conflicts of interest, and abuses of authority are the hallmarks of the Corpus administration.”

Cordell said Corpus should step down and Aenlle be fired. “Nothing short of new leadership can save this organization that is in turmoil, and its personnel demoralized.”

In her report’s conclusion, Cordell captured what many are now feeling: “As the first female/Latina sheriff of San Mateo County, Christina Corpus could have taken the Sheriff’s Office in a new and positive direction. Sadly, she has done no such thing.”

Sadly, outrageously, foolishly.

Since allegations of misconduct first surfaced months ago, Aenlle and Corpus have acted with extraordinary aggressiveness. They have repeated unsubstantiated and unrelenting accusations that they are the objects of a racist, sexist conspiracy by an “old boy’s network.”

They deny everything, including the long-present rumor that Aenlle and Corpus are intimately involved; the Cordell report proves the rumor is true. Corpus’ mantra that she is being attacked because she is a woman of color has all the markings of a last-resort refuge. It undermines the real issues faced by women of color in the public arena.

Whatever Corpus’ objective might have been, her responses have invited more accusations of corruption, incompetence, a tone-deaf political sensibility, and an arrogance of the highest order.

This week’s example was her ordering the arrest of Carlos Tapia, the president of the Deputy Sheriff’s Association, the labor union from which the complaints against Corpus have originated. The arrest is so obviously timed — minutes before a county press conference on the Cordell report — and so politically motivated that its intent and its credibility are transparent, a value Corpus repeatedly promised to bring to the office.

We can expect more of the same heavy-handed rhetoric from Corpus. This leaves the county to ponder its next steps.

At a special session Wednesday, the supervisors voted unanimously to call on Corpus to resign; to fire Aenlle for violating numerous county policies and practices; to refer the matter to the civil grand jury; to refer the matter to District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe for a criminal investigation; and to launch a countywide charter amendment that would give the board limited authority to remove the sheriff from office.

Corpus will not resign; it seems unlikely Aenlle will leave willingly.

The grand jury referral is civil, not criminal, and could lead to a formal accusation of illegal conduct. If that happens, the accusation is investigated by prosecutors, quite possibly outside the county. This could take as much as two years. A criminal conviction also could result in Corpus' removal.

The charter amendment is proposed by Supervisor Ray Mueller. He said it could be on the ballot as soon as this spring. I am skeptical the public would want to give the board this kind of authority — no matter how narrowly drawn, although Mueller said Wednesday, "I always respect the intelligence of the public and when they see (the Cordell) report and they see the facts, they're going to be with us on this."

The sheriff was elected two years ago with nearly 57% of the vote. It is an office with its own responsibility to the public and it has — and should have — a significant measure of independence.

All of which cries out for a recall election. The scandal is still in its earliest stages; no one is rushing to pursue a recall. It would be a substantial undertaking, requiring, among other challenges, the collection of more than 44,000 recall petition signatures within a fairly tight timeframe. All the more reason to take this path.

The public put her in office; the public should put her out. Eliminate even the hint that this is a conspiracy among a handful of county officials.

The first step should be a call for Corpus' resignation by 25-50 of the county's most prominent public figures. Not because she will heed the call, but because we need to see our leaders rally to the county's ethical traditions — the high standards we long

have held for the conduct of people in public office. Deliver a clear message that there are unchangeable and fundamental tenets that are a foundation of our collective character.

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